

Hospital Corpsman Master Chief William Ellis Dawkins



HMCN William Ellis (he preferred to be called Ellis) Dawkins was born in 1935 in Rockingham, North Carolina. His Navy career spanned 36 years. He served with all three Marine Corps Divisions, three ships, and several MTFs in the US, Cuba, Japan, Viet Nam, and Florida. He was a graduate of King's Business College, Charlotte, NC, and the University of NY at Albany, NY.

He was the Command Master Chief for Naval Hospital Beaufort from July 1985 to June 1988, serving first with Commanding Officer Captain Carl Anthony Wesolowski, MSC, USN, and after 1 July 1986 with Captain Jeffrey Winfield Baldwin, MSC, USN. He retired from the USN on 1 September 1988.

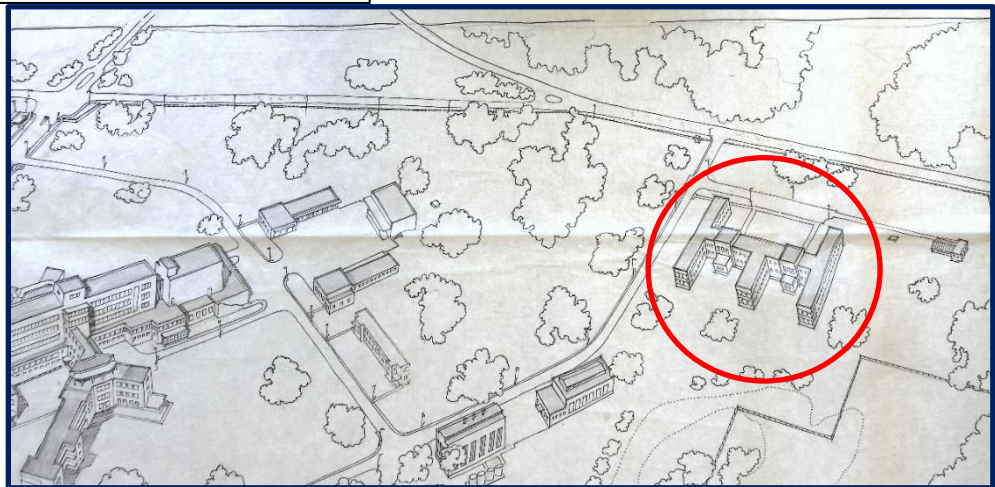
He advocated for and helped plan and design a new Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ), building 148, to replace the old BEQ building 9. Building 9 was a sprawling, 29,727 square foot H-plan two-story building built in 1949 that was the original barracks for the Hospital Corps. It was used for storage after Dawkins Hall was built, then was scheduled for demolition. The former site of building 9 is now (2022) the barracks parking lot just east of Dawkins Hall.



Awards

Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Ribbon
Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Ribbon with Valor
Navy and Marine Corps Combat Action Ribbon
Navy Good Conduct Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star
National Defense Service Medal Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star
Vietnam Service Ribbon
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation Ribbon
Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon

This pre-1956 sketch shows bldg. 9. Features of the installation that still exist today can also be seen: the east end of the hospital, the public works buildings, steam plant, etc.



Two other barracks were also original structures on the base, both built in 1948. The drawing and overhead photo show where the buildings were. Neither of them exist in 2022.

Building 7 was a 20,640 square foot two-story brick Nurses Quarters built in 1948. Part of the building was later used to house a gymnasium and the offices of the Personnel Support Detachment. It was demolished in the early 2000's, and the site is now the main parking lot to the south of Naval Hospital Beaufort.

Building 8 was a Bachelor Officer Quarters (BOQ) at the end of Bryant Street. Named after the Dental Corps first commissioned Navy dentist, the street was removed when the building was demolished. Building 8 was used as a BOQ for many years, but was later converted into offices. It was also demolished in the early 2000's. Looking towards the Beaufort River from Harris Road, one can still see a lone fire hydrant in the middle of an open field; it was there to support building 8, and is now just an oddly place hydrant for those who don't know the story.

The picture of building 8 to the right was included in the 28 April 1949 U.S. Naval Hospital Souvenir Edition of the Beaufort Gazette.



Capt. C.E. Adams, right, commanding officer of the U.S. Naval Hospital-Beaufort, accepts a memorial plaque from K.C. Colby, commander of AMVETS Post 70 Friday afternoon at the hospital. The plaque, honoring the late Master Chief William E. Dawkins, will be displayed in the quarter deck of the new bachelor enlisted quarters.

Bob Sealy/Gazette



Dawkins remembered in new Navy BEQ

By MARTI GATLIN
Gazette staff writer

Good guys do finish first, and Friday one man's good deeds became etched in stone.

Master Chief William Ellis Dawkins helped plan and design the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ) behind the U.S. Naval Hospital Beaufort and it now bears his name and memory.

The 64-room barracks was built in 1989 to replace an older BEQ. William Ellis Dawkins Hall houses about 100 Navy enlisted personnel.

Command master chief of the hospital from July 1985 to June 1988, Dawkins, who retired from the Navy on Sept. 1, 1988, made many contributions to the military and civilian community in the Lowcountry that were highlighted during Friday's outdoor dedication ceremony.

Three guest speakers paid tribute to the man they called "a sailor's sailor."

AMVETS Post Commander C. Colby of Post 70 in Port Royal, where Dawkins was a member, said his friend was "one of the Navy's finest master chiefs ever."

Colby then presented a memorial plaque to Capt. Clinton E. Adams, hospital commander, that will be displayed in Dawkins Hall.

"(Dawkins is) forever a part of Naval history," said Commander H. Thomas Wyatt, director for logistics health care support in Jacksonville, Fla.

Wyatt served with Dawkins at the Naval Hospital in Pensacola, Fla., in 1970.

Navy retired Capt. Jeffrey W. Baldwin, commanding officer of the Naval Hospital when Dawkins retired, said the command master chief "had a gentle manner, reserved and quiet, but always approachable and had a good sense of humor."

Baldwin said Dawkins was committed to his 36-year Navy career and "he did a lot of small things that meant a great deal."

Some of Dawkins' contributions included assisting the chief petty officer assigned as the liaison for the "Business Partnership" with Beaufort High School; increasing awareness of Prisoners of War/Missing in Action through continual recognition at all functions and weekly display of POW/MIA flags and special displays on days

of remembrance.

The command master chief was a member of various civic organizations — Port Royal Lodge No. 242 and life member of AMVETS Post No. 70, VFW Post No. 8760 in Burton, Oasis Shrine in Charlotte, N.C., Moose Lodge No. 1838 in Rockingham, N.C., American Legion in Columbia.

Patricia Pavey of Beaufort and a close friend of Dawkins, donated his Navy awards and medals and memorabilia that are displayed in a glass case on the barrack's first floor.

Hospital corpsmen Medal of Honor winners collected by Dawkins was also donated by Pavey and adorn the second floor in the "Hall of Honor."

"He was loved and respected and this (building dedication) exemplifies it," Pavey said following the ceremony. "When he passed away he left me his belongings."

Master Chief Dawkins passed away on 8 February 1994 in Naval Hospital Beaufort at the age of 58. He is buried in the Beaufort National Cemetery, Section 51, Site 135.



CAPT Jeffrey Baldwin was at the Dawkins Hall opening ceremony in August of 1996 (with CAPT Clinton E. Adams, MC, USN, who was CO in 1996). CAPT Baldwin said his CMC "had a gentle manner; reserved and quiet, but always approachable and had a good sense of humor."

HMCM Dawkins left his belonging to Patricia Pavey of Beaufort. She donated his Navy awards, medals, and memorabilia to the Navy; they are displayed in a glass case near the entry to the barrack that bears his name. Dawkins collected framed photos of Hospital Corpsman Medal of Honor winners along with copies of their citations; these were also donated by Pavey and adorn the history room at the Quarterdeck of Naval Hospital Beaufort.

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